IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) In a network of devices, a method for a querying device to determine the availability of network-connected devices, the method comprising:

at a querying device, building a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of ~~representing the availability of known~~ network-connected devices, prior to sending a query to network-connected devices,;

following the building of the GUI, sending a query from the querying device to the network-connected devices ~~querying the known network connected devices to determine their availability~~;

in response to the queries, updating the GUI representation of the network-connected devices.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

at a querying device user interface, issuing a network discovery command ~~requesting the availability of devices known to be connected to the network~~; and

wherein building [[a]] the GUI ~~representing the availability of known network devices~~ includes building the GUI in real-time, in response to querying device user interface network discovery command.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 ~~further comprising:~~

~~following the~~ wherein building [[of]] the GUI[[,]] includes initially representing each of the ~~known~~ network-connected devices ~~in the GUI~~ as unavailable.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 wherein sending the query to ~~querying of~~ the ~~known~~ network-connected devices includes spawning a thread from the querying device to query each of the network-connected devices; and

the method further comprising:

receiving a query reply from a first network-connected device; and

wherein updating the GUI representation includes ~~in response to receiving a query reply from a network-connected device,~~ changing the GUI representation of the first ~~that particular~~ network-connected device to available.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 further comprising:

failing to receive a query reply from a second network-connected device; and

wherein updating the GUI representation includes ~~in response to failing to receive a query reply from [[a]] the network-connected device,~~ maintaining the GUI representation of the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device as unavailable.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 wherein failing to receive ~~not receiving~~ a query reply from [[a]] the second network-connected device includes:

accepting a timeout period for the second ~~each~~ network-connected device query; and

if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received, determining that the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device is unavailable.

7. Canceled

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein spawning a thread from the querying device to ~~query each of~~ the ~~known~~ network-connected devices includes using a function selected from the group including a Sockets connect function, a ping function, and a NSLookup function.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein spawning a thread from the querying device to ~~query each of~~ the ~~known~~ network-connected devices includes requesting a True/False answer;

wherein receiving a query reply from [[a]] the first network-connected device includes returning a True answer; and

wherein changing the GUI representation of the first ~~that particular~~ network-connected device to available includes changing the GUI representation to available in response to a True answer.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 further comprising:

returning a False answer if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received for [[a]] the second network-connected device; and

wherein maintaining the GUI representation of the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device as unavailable includes maintaining the GUI representation as unavailable in response to the False answer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein building [[a]] the graphical user interface (GUI) representation ~~representing the availability~~ of network-connected devices includes building a GUI on a computer with a graphical interface; and

wherein spawning a thread from the querying device to the network-connected devices ~~issuing commands requesting the availability of the network-connected devices~~ includes requesting the availability of network-connected devices selected from the group including printers, copiers, scanners, faxes, automatic teller machines (ATMs), remote sensors, virtual private network (VPN) devices, satellite devices, and other computers.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

accepting a periodic refresh command; and

wherein building [[a]] the GUI representation ~~representing the availability~~ of ~~known~~ network-connected devices includes refreshing the GUI in response to a refresh command.

13. (Currently Amended) In a network of connected devices, a method of building a graphical user interface (GUI) representing the availability of the network-connected devices independent of system timeouts, the method comprising;

from a querying device, building a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of ~~representing the availability of known~~ network-connected devices;

initially representing [[the]] network-connected devices as unavailable;

sending a query to a network-connected device; and

modifying the GUI representation of ~~to represent available~~ the network-connected device[[s]] in response to sending the query ~~communicating with those particular network-connected devices~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein building the GUI includes initially representing the network-connected device as unavailable;

the method further comprising:

receiving a query reply from the network-connected device; and,

wherein modifying ~~maintaining~~ the GUI representation includes [[to]] representing the ~~unavailable~~ network-connected device[[s]] as available in response to the query reply ~~not communicating with those particular network-connected devices~~.

15. (Currently Amended) In a network of connected devices, a system for displaying network device availability, the system comprising:

a querying device having a graphical user interface (GUI) representing ~~the availability of known~~ network-connected devices, the querying device having a network connection port;

at least one device having a network connection port for communications with the querying device; and

wherein the querying device sends a query to5 ~~queries known~~ network-connected devices, after building the GUI, ~~to determine their availability, following the building of the GUI~~, and updates the GUI representation of the network-connected devices in response to sending the queries.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the querying device has a user interface to accept commands ~~requesting the availability of the network-connected devices~~; and

wherein the querying device builds [[a]] the GUI[[,]] in real-time, ~~representing the availability of network devices,~~ in response to commands from the querying device user interface.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein the GUI initially represents each of the network-connected devices as unavailable.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 17 wherein the querying device spawns a thread to query each of the network-connected devices, and in response to receiving a query reply from a first network-connected device, changes the GUI representation of the first ~~that particular~~ network-connected device to available.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18 wherein the querying device maintains the GUI representation of a second ~~the particular~~ network-connected device as unavailable, in

response to not receiving a query reply from the second ~~that particular~~ network-connected device.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 19 wherein the querying device further includes an operating system and a timer configured with a default timeout value;

wherein the querying device maintains the GUI representation of the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device as unavailable, in response to not receiving a query reply, as follows:

starting the timer at the beginning of each network-connected device query; and

if the timeout period expires before a query reply is received from [[a]] the second network-connected device, determining that the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device is unavailable.

21. Canceled

22. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the querying device spawns a thread to query each of the network-connected devices by using function selected from the group including a Sockets connect function, a ping function, and a NSLookup function.

23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 22 wherein the querying device GUI requests a True/False answer in response to each network-connected device query;

wherein the querying device GUI receives a True answer from the first ~~available~~ network-connected device[[s]]; and

wherein the querying device GUI changes the representation of the first ~~that particular~~ network-connected device to available in response to a True answer.

24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23 wherein the querying device generates a False answer in response to a the timeout period expiring before a query reply is received for [[a]] the second network-connected device; and

wherein the querying device GUI maintains the representation of the second ~~particular~~ network-connected device as unavailable in response to the False answer.

25. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the querying device is a computer and the GUI is represented on a visual display attached to the computer; and

wherein the network-connected devices are selected from the group including printers, copiers, scanners, faxes, automatic teller machines (ATMs), remote sensors, virtual private networks (VPNs), satellite devices, and computers.

26. (Currently Amended) The system of 20 wherein the timer is configured with a refresh rate value; and

wherein the querying device accepts commands for spawning threads to ~~requesting the availability of the~~ network-connected devices at the refresh rate value; and

wherein the querying device refreshes the GUI, in real-time, in response to the refresh rate value.